

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

OMB-01 /070 W

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R 140731Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0009

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS CLOSE WITH MINOR FLURRY

REF: (A) SEOUL 8064 070756Z OCT, (B) SEOUL 7977 050917Z

SUMMARY. ON OCTOBER 12, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FINISHED FALL INTERPRELLATION OF ROKG CABINET IN FAIRLY BLAND, UNUSUALLY PLACID SESSION WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BREAKING VERY LITTLE NEW GROUND AND OPPOSITION NDP RELATIVELY SUBDUED. ONLY FLURRY WAS CAUSED BY OUTSPOKEN INDEPENDENT SON CHU-HANG WHO WAS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF ASSEMBLY ITSELF AND IMPLICITLY CRITICAL OF PRESIDENT PAK. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WHAT WAS PERHAPS MOST FLAMBOYANT IF NOT MOST IMPORTANT VERBAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN AN ASSEMBLYMAN AND ROKG DURING INTERPELLATION SESSIONS JUST FINISHED, INDEPENDENT SON CHU-HANG ADVISED HIS COLLEAGUES AND THE PRESIDENT, THAT PAK CHUNG-HUI SHOULD STEP DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF RULING DRP. ACCORDING TO SON'S REASONING, YUSHIN CONSTITUTION STATES QUITE EXPLICITLY THAT NO MEMBER OF ANTIONAL CONFERENCE FOR REUNIFICATION (NCU) CAN BE AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY. NCU IS BODY WHICH FORMALLY ELECTED PAK

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TO PRESIDENCY, APPROVED HIS ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENTS TO

YUCHONGHOE SEATS AND IS A BODY HE CONCURRENTLY CHAIRS. ALTHOUGH SON'S CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT WAS ONLY IMPLICIT, HE DREW SOME BLOOD IN HIS ATTACK ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF, CALLING IT A CURIO AND TOURIST ATTRACTION AT PRESENT. SON ALSO SPECIFICALLY ANGERED YUCHONGHOE BY CONSISTENTLY DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN ELECTED AND NON-ELECTED MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY IN HIS REMARKS. DRP FLOOR LEADER THREATENED TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST SON BUT AFTER LONG MEETING WITH SPEAKER, DRP LEADERSHIP WAS MOLLIFIED AND AGREED TO ONLY STRIKING SON'S REMARKS FROM ASSEMBLY MINUTES. PRESS COVERED VERY LITTLE OF SON'S REMARKS, LEAVING OUT REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT.

2. INTERPELLATORS CONSISTENTLY INTRODUCED QUESTIONS ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS THROUGHOUT PLENARY SESSION. ROKG ASSURED ASSEMBLYMEN THAT GOVT WAS NOT DEVELOPING ANY NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ACCORD WITH PROVISIONS OF NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY TO WHICH IT IS SIGNATORY. WHEN NDP QUESTIONER ASKED IF ROK WAS CONSIDERING MOVEMENT INTO A TRIANGULAR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT WITH JAPAN AND U.S., FOREIGN MINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT SUCH PLAN WAS NOT NECESSARY AT PRESENT AND THAT ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE MADE DIFFICULT BY PRESENT JAPANESE CONSTITUTION. ROKG SAW NO PROBLEM IN QUESTION OF U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREAN PENINSULA BUT CONCEDED IT WOULD "BE AN ISSUE IN U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN." WHEN ASKED IF ROK PLANNED TO STRIVE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN NON-ALIGNED NATIONS GROUP, FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT ALTHOUGH ROKG HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO NOW, IT WOULD WORK TO SEEK OUT AND/OR RETAIN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THESE SAME NATIONS.

3. ON DOMESTIC SIDE, NDP ASKED IF THOSE PERSONS SENTENCED AND SERVING TIME IN MYONGDONG CASE WOULD BE RELEASED AND GOVT. SPOKESMAN ANSWERED NEGATIVELY, CLAIMING THAT TRIAL WAS FAIR AND GOVT. SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN JUDICIAL PROCESS. WHEN OPPOSITION ASKED IF TIGHT RESTRICTIONS ON STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS AT UNIVERSITIES WOULD BE EVENTUALLY LOOSENEED, ROKG ANSWERED THAT THIS WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS. IT WAS NOTED BRIEFLY IN PASSING THAT STUDENTS DID NOT PARTICIPATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANTI-NORTH DEMONSTRATIONS AFTER PANMUNJOM INCIDENT OF AUGUST 18, BUT GOVT. DID NOT REPLY. (SNU FACULTY MEMBER TOLD EMBOFF THAT ROKG OFFICIALS "VERY BRIEFLY" CONSIDERED STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEMONSTRATIONS BUT WERE QUICKLY DISABUSED OF NOTION WHEN FACULTY MEMBERS CONTENTED THAT STUDENTS COULD NOT BE CONTAINED TO ONE AREA OR ONE POSITION.) ROKG ALSO DENIED STRONG RUMOR THAT GOVT. PLANNED TO MOVE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT TO TAECHON

AREA.

5. CURRENT ASSEMBLY PLANS ARE TO CONTINUE COMMITTEE SESSIONS TO OCTOBER 16 WHEN SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET NEARINGS WILL BE HELD. FROM OCTOBER 18 THROUGH 21, SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET WILL BE REVIEWED IN SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE LEADING TO FULL PLENARY SESSION ON BILL ON OCTOBER 22. COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE ON MAIN BUDGET AND OTHER BUSINESS THROUGH NOVEMBER 13.

6. COMMENT: FLURRY THAT SON CAUSED CONFIRMS LAST YEAR'S EXPERIENCE THAT EXPLICIT CRITICISM OF ASSEMBLY AND IMPLICIT CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. AT SAME TIME IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT IN NAME OF PARLIAMENTARY "IMUNITY," SON WAS NOT DISCIPLINED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL08231
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760386-0020
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761052/aaaabtbx.tel
Line Count: 131
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SEOUL 8064, 76 SEOUL 7977
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 NOV 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <23 SEP 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS CLOSE WITH MINOR FLURRY
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006